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VOL. 3, ISSUE 2 | MAY 2009 | RS 50
R.N.I. NO: DELENG/2007/19719

gfiles

INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

FOTOS4INDIA

A bold new agenda for governance

Vice-President Hamid Ansari does some hard talking to the bureaucracy to face up to the exigencies of the coalition era

Also: Prabhat Kumar's 15-point plan of action

Plus: Civil Service's top achievers

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Tough talk from the VEEP

Civil servants are the servants of the state and not the government alone

by Vice-President Hamid Ansari

I WOULD like to felicitate all those who have won the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration for 2007-08 for individual and team initiatives in diverse fields. I do hope they will continue their good work and that their example will be emulated by others in the Civil Service.

The concept of Civil Service has evolved over time; so have notions of its role and responsibilities. Independent India inherited from the British period a comprehensive civil service structure and established practices. Its utility for ensuring national unity and good administration in the country was recognized by Sardar Patel, accepted by the Constituent Assembly and incorporated in the Constitution. It is relevant today to recall the Sardar's perception and his vision:

"I need hardly emphasize that an efficient, disciplined and contented Service, assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is the *sine qua non* of sound administration under a democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule. The service must be above party and we should ensure that political considerations either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether ... Constitutional guarantees and safeguards are the best medium of providing for these services and are likely to prove more lasting."

This statement enunciated three principles: (1) the Civil Service will be above party politics, (2) political considerations would be eschewed in its recruitment, discipline and control, and (3) Constitutional safeguards and guarantees essential for its effective functioning will be provided.

The challenge in the early years of the Republic was to reconcile differing perceptions, of the political leadership emerging from the freedom movement on the one hand and the inherited Civil Service on the other, on two aspects of the functioning of the latter. The first of these related to meaning of Civil Service "neutrality"; the second to the question of its "commitment" to policies. Prime Minister Nehru responded to both unambiguously. The Civil Service cannot distance itself from the fundamentals of state policy nor can it function effective-

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Lack of intellectual and professional integrity has taken many forms – from introducing a slant in policy notes to an excessive careerism and focus on postings leading to regrettable acts of omission and commission

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VOL.3, ISSUE 2 | MAY 2009

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Published and printed by Anil Tyagi on behalf of
Sarvashrestha Media Pvt. Ltd at Mayur Print House,
A 29/1 Naraina Industrial Area, Phase-1, New Delhi-110028

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From the Editor-in-Chief

OUR cover story, starting with a punchy speech from Vice-President Hamid Ansari (see facing page, left), goes to the very core of what *gfiles* is about. Fortuitously, your magazine's second birth anniversary coincided with India's Fourth Civil Services Day, an annual event started by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to remind the government officials who run this nation about their onerous duty to their land, and to reward those from among them who have dared to dream and to do.

The cover line, "agenda for change" captures, I believe, the essence of the Civil Services Day. The medium is the message. Our bureaucracy's top brass, under the stewardship of the Cabinet Secretary, comes together in a rare gathering to confabulate about, to implement, and to recognize reform, while reminding themselves of first principles.

Most Indians who continue to believe that Good Governance – the bedrock of participative democracy – will continue to flounder on the business-as-usual rock, would discover to their pleasant surprise that the theme of this exclusive but august round-table – with the full support of the Prime Minister – is change, change, and more change. Bureaucrats hold up a mirror to themselves and chart new directions for administrative initiatives. Unfortunately, these stories do not make front page stories in daily newspapers.

The pace may be slow, the ground realities may not alter as rapidly as all of us would like, but at least a tone is being set that is principled, pragmatic, and forward-looking. During his opening remarks to the group, Vice-President Ansari echoed Sardar Patel's perception and vision: "The Civil Service must be above party and we should ensure that political considerations either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether..."

How prophetic, and how relevant to today's affairs when, in the words of a former official quoted by the Vice-President, "civil servants, often through following the policy of least resistance, have indirectly participated in the wrongdoing of the politicians and contributed substantially towards the erosion of people's confidence in the objectivity of civil servants." Speaking on the subject of the role of the Civil Service in an era of coalition governments, Vice-President Ansari emphasized a reality that lies at the very heart of Good Governance: "Civil servants are the servants of the state and not the government alone."

Since its inception this is the theme that *gfiles* has underscored through editorials, columns, stories, case studies. In the words of Cabinet Secretary Chandrasekhar: "Enhanced government effectiveness not only affects the welfare of the citizen in the short run but also...benefits the socially and economically weaker sections of society." In other words, Performance Matters.

And it is in this context that we have featured some of the nation's civil servants who have championed and implemented reforms in health and sanitation, e-governance, motherhood and child survival, activity based learning, financial sustainability in metros and villages across the nation. The very fact that they were honoured with awards at the Civil Service Day is testament to the fact that the government recognizes the vital need for powerful change agents in the nation's future agenda.

Also, as part of our cover story package, we have included a 15-point programme for the new government that takes over. It has been written by former Cabinet Secretary Prabhat Kumar who is also head of the IC Centre for Governance.

gfiles salutes all these efforts to make India a better-governed nation.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

LETTERS: I was delighted to read the "First Stirrings" of KS Bains in the April 2009 issue. IAS officers, during their initial years, do so much but, sadly, we come to know of it only after their retirement. To my mind, it was through application of common sense that Bains could turn around the economy of Lahaul and Spiti through cultivation of virus-free potatoes.

If all the district collectors of the country could apply this mental attribute to developmental issues confronting their respective districts, general prosperity would not be far off and that too at minimum cost and with no damage to the environment.

Harbans Singh,
Ludhiana

Continued on page 4

LETTERS

Continued from page 3

Mr Bains' achievement in growing disease-free potatoes deserves the widest possible dissemination, similar to that of the ANAND dairy story. He must take necessary action for this as he owes it to the people of India to tell them of his success and that of the simple potato farmers. In India, we disseminate stories of crime and so on, but not of these simple but fantastic achievements.
Veronica Peris, via email

I am glad to see the article. However, there are some errors:

Though Lahaul and Spiti were one unit at the time, the seed potato cultivation was taken up only in Lahaul.

My father was not the Chief Investigating Officer of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials but one of the seven investigating officers, one each from the countries concerned. He represented India in the investigation team.
KS Bains, IAS (Retd)
Padma Shri

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COVER STORY

civil services day address

Continued from page 2

ly without being supportive of the policies developed through due process.

Both these notions resurfaced from time to time either to retard change or to stretch commitment from policies to individuals or political groups. It is to the credit of our polity that the overwhelming majority distanced itself, in principle if not always in practice, from such efforts. It also became clear early enough that in a new India the role of the Civil Service has to go beyond "good administration" in the traditional sense to include the requisite skills and motivation for nation-building and developmental activities.

THE Civil Service is an integral part of our society and its structure of governance. Its DNA is shaped by the imperatives of social mores, political calculus, and economic context of the times. One aspect of this is the emergence of coalition politics and governments constituted pursuant to it. It can be attributed to a deepening of democracy and the emergence of a genuinely federalized multi-party system accompanied by the rise of regional, linguistic, caste-based and other parties promoting such sectional interests.

Unlike popular perceptions, coalitions are neither unique to India nor inherently destabilizing. In many countries the world over, as also in India itself at the state and federal levels, coalitions on agreed programmes have worked satisfactorily. The difficulty lies in demarcating the fine line between political like-mindedness and political opportunism. It is rarely articulated coherently and inevitably surfaces in the day-to-day functioning of the administrative structure. The first impact of the mischief is thus experienced by the civil servant.

What then should the role of the Civil Services be in an era of political coalitions? Our own experience sheds light on two of its aspects.

First, a distinguished former Cabinet Secretary has noted the tendency by political parties to use the bureaucratic machine as a substitute for the lack of active field cadres and it thus becomes an alternative cadre for the parties in power. In this context, he observed, the most important quality for the bureaucracy in the coalition era is to be "apolitical", adding that "in the Indian context it means that the bureaucracy is loyal to the Constitution, and though under the party in power, it functions in a way which is fair to all irrespective of their political affiliations".

Second, an editorial in a business daily observed recently that "coalitions have taken on the nature of the old *mansabdari* system – the greater the number of horses you can offer to the king, the greater the size of territory for you to pillage". It expressed concern at the monetary and economic cost for the nation as a consequence of coalition arrangements in power. One consequence of this, in the words of a distinguished former civil servant and legislator, is the propensity to "follow the policy of least resistance". This "indirect participation in the wrongdoings of the

A distinguished former Cabinet Secretary has noted the tendency by political parties to use the bureaucratic machine as a substitute for the lack of active field cadres and it thus becomes an alternative cadre for the parties in power

FOTOS4INDIA

The nation's top bureaucrats on Civil Service Day: a new look for the steel frame?

politicians" by the civil servants through silence and passive inaction, he notes, has "contributed substantially towards the erosion of people's confidence in the objectivity and impartiality of civil servants". Much the same assessment comes from other eminent former civil servants of yesteryears. The near unanimity of their views cannot be altogether ignored.

The effort to influence the functioning of the professional bureaucracy is not an Indian novelty, though the quantum and frequency does matter. Coalition politics, too, is a fact of life. Nostalgia and lamentation for a lost utopia that never really existed, is not an option. Changes in the ground situation, public expectations and technological innovations, are the ground realities. The challenge for the civil service today is to explore and develop the avenues for proper functioning in the context and the spirit of the responsibility assigned to it by the laws of the land and the policies developed through appropriate legislative processes.

The first of these responsibilities pertains to the dispensation of justice. This, in our vocabulary, means the Rule of Law. It is the foundation of democratic governance and the Civil Service has a pivotal role in upholding it. Professor Upendra Baxi has sought to read the rule of law as the rule of good law that is reflective of the struggle of a people "to make power accountable, governance just, and state ethical". He opines that the Indian Constitutional conception of the rule of law links its four core notions: rights, development, governance and justice.

A few years back, a senior law officer of the government wrote that the Rule of Law is under serious threat and that there is widespread popular disillusionment. Civil society groups consider the "delayed justice dispensation system" responsible for it. Why does this happen?

We know that the legal process of securing justice in our country is time-consuming; there is also an acquittal rate of around 90 per cent. The public has thus little option but to resort to administrative facilitation and the procedures of administrative justice. Legislators are commonly assessed by their ability to secure administrative facilitation and justice to their constituents rather than by their efficiency in law-making or holding the government to account! Thus the ultimate victim of non-implementation of the Rule of Law and delayed justice dispensation system is the common man and woman who are at the receiving end of non-enforcement of their rights and discriminatory application of the laws, and without the clout to secure either of them. Consequently, every effort by a civil servant towards administrative facilitation and accelerated dispensation of administrative justice to the public goes a long way in ameliorating its material condition and redresses its grievances.

The difficulty lies in demarcating the fine line between political like-mindedness and political opportunism. It is rarely articulated coherently and inevitably surfaces in the day-to-day functioning of the administrative structure

NEXT in relevance to the dispensation of administrative justice are questions of social development and empowerment. Some civil servants have done exemplary work in these fields. It is, however, a matter of some concern that very few civil servants today feel attracted to it. Their priorities, instead, are finance, banking, communication and IT, railways, aviation, petroleum and natural gas, shipping, road transport and highways, etc. This is suggestive of social priorities and the choices emanating from it and should be a matter of concern.

Take the question of integrity. We constantly hear, and rightly so, of the need for public figures and civil servants to exhibit the highest standards of personal probity and honesty. While this is an essential condition of good governance, is it sufficient? Is not dishonesty of the mind as dangerous as monetary or pecuniary dishonesty? This lack of intellectual and professional integrity has taken many forms – from introducing a slant in policy notes to an excessive careerism and focus on postings leading to regrettable acts of omission and commission. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that any of the functions listed above would be more adversely affected by the existence of a coalition any more than with a one-party government.

These perceptions can be quantified. More importantly, they impact decisively on public opinion. There is, therefore, a demonstrated need for correctives. A performance survey of half a century shows that in terms of Sardar Patel's perimeters, while the polity has delivered by giving Constitutional safeguards to civil servants

and implementing sound recruitment procedures, the politicians have faltered in varying degrees on discipline and control and the civil servants have often enough succumbed to the temptation of tailoring professionally sound advice to subjective considerations.

THE only answer would lie in the principles of the Constitution. Civil servants are the servants of the state and not of the government alone. More than at any time in our history as a Republic, the necessity for the civil servant to be guided by the Directive Principles of State Policy is paramount and immediate. Each of you is enjoined to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a social order in which social, economic and political justice shall inform all institutions. You need to work to minimize the inequalities of income, status, facilities and opportunities and to secure a legal system that promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity. These are not rhetorical assertion and the realization of these ideals should be fundamental to the governance of the country. Coalition programmes cannot be at variance with these principles.

The examples provided by the winners of the awards today give us hope that an innovative and pro-active Civil Service can continue to act as an agent of social change as envisaged by the Constitution.

Let me remind you that there is nothing novel about sound professionalism; it has been prescribed in all periods of history. I will paraphrase for you the advice given to civil servants in the 8th century:

"The ruler cannot dispense with you. You alone make him a competent ruler. Your position with regard to rulers is that you are the ears through which they hear, the eyes through which they see, the tongues through which they speak, and the hands through which they touch. No craftsman needs more than you to combine all the praiseworthy good traits and all memorable and highly regarded qualities...

"(The civil servant) needs on his own account, and his master who trusts and expects him, to be mild where mildness is needed, to be understanding where judgement is needed, to be enterprising where enterprise is needed, to be hesitant where hesitation is needed. He must profess modesty, justice and fairness. He must keep secrets. He must be faithful in difficult circumstances. By virtue of his natural intelligence, good education, and outstanding experience, he must know what is going to happen to him before it happens, and he must know the results of his action before action starts. He must make proper preparations for everything, and he must set up everything in its proper form...

"Detest prejudices with all your heart. Guard against backbiting and calumny. Beware of haughtiness, foolishness and pride."

Does any of this not hold good today?

I once again congratulate all the winners and thank the Cabinet Secretary for inviting me to inaugurate this function. g

(Excerpted from the speech at the Civil Services Day Awards function on April 21)

Vice-President Ansari with MK Narayanan: advice and consent

The most important quality for the bureaucracy in the coalition era is to be apolitical. It means that the bureaucracy is loyal to the Constitution, and though under the party in power, it functions in a way which is fair to all irrespective of their political affiliations

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Infrastructure development in the form of roads across the area and bridges over the river Bhadra
Development and Maintenance of the Kendriya Vidyalaya.
Our environmental concerns:
Plantation of 8.5 million saplings covering 45 different species
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Construction of the Lakya dam to prevent silts entering the River Bhadra
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The BOLD and the BUREAUCRAT

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Individuals

Upendra Tripathy, IAS,
Former Managing Director, Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Government of Karnataka

Initiative: Financial sustainability of Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Karnataka

WITH the changing face of urban society and following the influx of population from rural areas, the size of the metropolitan cities is rapidly increasing. Bangalore's population has more than doubled since 1981 and the corresponding demand for reliable public transport has exerted enormous pressure on the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC).

In the year 2001-02, BMTC had inadequate fleet strength to cater to the growing population and demand, an ageing fleet, a high level of commuter dissatisfaction, rapid decline in ridership, delays in implementation of projects resulting in cost and time overruns, weak mechanisms to address customer grievances and low motivation levels in employees. This sub-optimal public transport system was undermining the productivity of the megapolis.

Tripathy, Managing Director, BMTC, undertook a series of interventions and innovations to deal with this dismal situation in the year 2003. These measures included procurement of additional buses, focussing on administrative reforms and commuter-friendly initiatives combined with technological applications, human resources development and capacity-building of employees to turn around the organization. These efforts showed dramatic results within a short time. The profits of the Corporation increased from Rs 13 cr per annum in 2000-01 to Rs 80 cr in 2004-05, Rs 115 cr in 2005-06 and Rs 224 cr in 2006-07. These initiatives also led to tangible improvements in the quality of public transport services, increase in ridership, lowering of accident rate and improvement in air quality. By his efforts, Tripathy was able to bring financial sustainability to the BMTC, and this model is being copied by other transport corporations.

MP Vijaya Kumar, IAS,
Former Commissioner of Chennai Municipal Corporation, Government of Tamil Nadu

Initiative: Activity Based Learning (ABL) methodology for primary education, Tamil Nadu

IN spite of ranking high on most of the development indicators, the government schools of Tamil Nadu have an alarmingly low level of academic achievement in spite of the government's best efforts to ensure universal primary education and substantial budgetary allocation year after year.

Under the leadership of Kumar, the then Commissioner of Chennai Municipal Corporation, thirteen Chennai Corporation schools got together to put in place an innovative method of learning methodology. They began working on developing and implementing the Activity Based Learning (ABL) methodology to address gaps in primary education.

Drawn from the already existing teaching methodologies like "Learning Ladders" of Rishi Valley Rural Education Centre, Vijaya Kumar and his team applied Activity Based Learning to schools at primary education level, initially as a pilot project.

The new methodology targeted students of Classes I to IV by transforming the classroom environment and learning dynamics, by making the child the centre of his/her academic world. Textbooks were broken down into activities, learning materials were colour-coded and arranged in ladders, annual exam was eliminated and achievement chart maintained for the whole class.

ABL methodology is a groundbreaking effort in making learning fun, quality-oriented and child-centred, and can be replicated easily. It has resulted in a remarkable improvement in the academic performance of these students and also improved the attendance. The method is now used in primary schools all over the state and has also been adopted by other states.

Nengcha Lhouvum, IFS,
Ambassador of India in Lebanon

Initiative: Evacuation of Indian nationals from Beirut during the war

ON July 12, 2006, Israel launched an air attack on Lebanon. This resulted in destruction of civilian areas including infrastructure like roads, bridges, towns, villages, etc. Israel also imposed a full naval as well as air blockade. In the next 33 days, over 1200 civilians (including one Indian) were killed, over 4000 wounded, a million displaced and Lebanon's infrastructure destroyed. The bombing of civilian areas created panic, triggering one of the biggest evacuation operations of Indian nationals abroad. The Indian Embassy at Lebanon was tasked to ensure the safety and security of the Indian community which was estimated to be about 12,000.

Mrs Nengcha Lhouvum, the Indian Ambassador, acted quickly by establishing contact with the Indian community and Indian associations in Lebanon so that the people of Indian origin wanting to be evacuated could be identified and brought to safety. There was a major problem as many Indians had not legally entered the country. A big difficulty was resolving irregularities in passports and immigration status. The challenges before the Ambassador and the Indian Embassy were to work out the modalities and logistics of evacuation through land, sea and air; liaising with the MEA, Ministry of Overseas Indians' Affairs, Indian Navy, Air-India, the Indian Embassies in Syria, Cyprus, Israel and the Lebanese authorities.

Despite these difficulties, the Ambassador and the small embassy organized a largescale evacuation by sea. The evacuation operation lasted 39 days during which the Indian Navy made six forays to Beirut to evacuate 1,863 Indians and 524 South Asians free of charge. Mrs Nengcha Lhouvum personally organized and supervised this evacuation with extreme dedication and efficiency.

Dr Amarjit Singh, IAS
Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Gujarat

Initiative: Safe motherhood and child survival programme

MATERNAL mortality is a serious problem in India, the mortality rate being about 350 to 400 per 100,000 childbirths. In Gujarat, in the year 2003, 469 mothers died during delivery per 100,000 live births. The primary reason for maternal deaths was that many deliveries were being conducted by untrained people in unhygienic conditions.

Guided by the concerns over high Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Dr Amarjit Singh, the then Commissioner, Health and Medical Services, Government of Gujarat, initiated the scheme called Chiranjeevi Yojana in April 2005. The aim was to improve access to institutional delivery for those mothers who were below the poverty line and who remained generally underrepresented in terms of health coverage.

In this context, the government initiated the idea of utilizing the existing resources of the state by empanelling existing private practitioners for providing safe delivery. These practitioners were made responsible for providing skilled obstetric care to families below the poverty line. In return, the government paid them a flat fee per hundred deliveries, a part of which was paid in advance.

Chiranjeevi Yojana thus allows families living below the poverty line to use either public or private health facilities free of cost. It also covers indirect costs such as transportation and incentives for any accompanying person. The scheme has improved coverage of maternal health care, and Dr Amarjit Singh has been responsible for conceiving and implementing this idea.

Teams

Dr Rohit Yadav, IAS,
District Collector
Ritu Sain, IAS,
DC (D&R), district Surguja

Initiative: Improved health and sanitation practices, district Surguja, Chhattisgarh

SURGUJA is the largest but one of the most backward districts of Chhattisgarh with low rates of literacy and a high incidence of malnutrition and infant mortality. Primitive tribal communities constitute over 50 per cent of the population.

Using existing resources, the officers produced positive changes and worked out points of linkages among various sectors like health, education, panchayats and rural development. This facilitated, within a short period, construction of more than 85,000 individual household toilets and 2,703 sanitation complexes in schools of 256 identified panchayats. Communities took ownership of the project through monitoring of construction, imposition of fines and management of assets. By providing proper access to handpumps, the problem of drinking water was, to a great extent, also solved. Awareness about personal hygiene increased, and this is visible in the increased use of bathrooms in villages. Panchayat vigil has brought an improvement in teachers' attendance. Line departments now act in synergy with better results.

There has been a marked improvement in the hygiene awareness of school-going children. The efforts of the officers has resulted in better living conditions for the people of the district.

Anil Kumar, IAS, IG Registration
Dilip Kumar, AIG Registration
Birendra Kumar Singh
Baruna Nandan Singh
Nirmal Kishor Prasad, SSA
Sanjay Kumar, SSA

Initiative: BiSCORE: e-registration in Bihar

THE conventional system of property registration in Bihar was characterized by cumbersome procedures, delays and corruption. Registration was very tedious and time-consuming. The system of manually copying deeds in registers had collapsed. The backlog of record maintenance was about 7 to 8 years.

The Registration Department of the Bihar government wanted to bring in efficiency and transparency in the registration process and bring back the confidence of the stakeholders. To meet their expectations, an innovative ICT-based complete solution for e-registration of properties in the state named BiSCORE (Bihar System of Computerized Registration) was designed and implemented. It involves complete automation of processes with less paper and state-of-the-art record archival system at all registry offices in the state.

All 105 registry offices of the state have been SCORE-enabled in a record time of three months with a cost-effective Hardware on Hire Basis (HOHB) model. This has resulted in increase in state revenue and accrual of funds in the BiSCORE society, and created new job opportunities and healthy competition amongst the entrepreneurs. BiSCORE also demonstrates the innovative use of state-of-the-art technologies like fingerprint biometric devices, web cameras, scanners, etc. The entire scheme is self-sustainable and verifiable. It has been completely adapted during the last year to the age-old government working environment and has effectively changed the 200-year-old system of manual property registration in the state.

Anurag Goel, IAS, Secretary, MCA
Yudhvir Singh Malik, IAS, then JS, MCA
Dr Sheela Bhide, IAS, then JS, MCA
R Chandrashekhar, IAS, then AS(IT)
Jitesh Khosla, IAS, JS, MCA
S Sridharan, JA,

Initiative: Ministry of Corporate Affairs, e-governance project

ANY company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 requires filing information on an annual basis with the Registrar of Companies (RoC). In addition, certain corporate actions such as change of registered office, change of name, etc, requires approval from the RoC. Over the years, the number of companies registered under this Act have increased from about 30,000 in 1956 to more than 8 lakhs in 2007. This has created tremendous pressure on the office of the RoC and the process of statutory filings and seeking approvals became extremely inefficient, leading to inordinate delays and the corporate sector losing numerous man-days in filing of returns and/or seeking approvals from the RoC. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) could not perform its regulatory functions relating to compliance management and enforcement.

To tackle this problem, the Government of India conceptualized "MCA21" which ensured anywhere, anytime, secure access for MCA services, practically free of paper. The project involved re-engineering of processes, digitization of the legacy of documents, enabling of e-filing and amendments in the Companies Act and rules to create an enabling legal framework. It has enabled the corporate sector to file their returns and obtain approvals from the RoC in a time-bound and transparent manner, without loss of man days. This approach has allowed the government to maintain focus on statutory and value-based aspects of the work while other tasks are largely handled through the use of technology. The MCA has been able to reposition itself as a facilitator enabling the corporate sector and other stakeholders to contribute to the achievement of the targeted economic growth of the country.

Team with Vice-President and Cabinet Secretary in the middle

Jarnail Singh, IAS,
Former Chief Secretary
RR Rashmi, IAS
S Sunderlal Singh, IAS,
K Radhakumar Singh, IAS,
M Budhimala Devi
O Shaliza Chanu

Initiative: Computerization of personnel information system in Manipur

DURING the 1970s and 1980s, Government of Manipur embarked upon an ambitious employment expansion plan without much focus on strengthening the institutional mechanism for effective public service delivery. However, the rapid expansion also created opportunities for malpractices like fake and adhoc appointments. Posts were often filled without appropriate sanctions from a competent authority, officers were transferred from hills to the plains without posting of substitutes, etc, resulting in serious deficiencies in availability and quality of services in the hill regions. Records of post creations were found missing or destroyed.

In addition, the implementation of the fourth and the fifth Pay Commission A ward, for a total workforce of an assumed number of 70,000 employees, added to the financial resource crunch, faced by the State.

For rectifying the process and procedures for employment within the Government and controlling expenditure on salaries, officers of the State Government started an initiative to design a Computerised Personnel Information System (CPIS). It was recommended by the Fiscal Resource and Budget Management Act, 2005 which advocated disciplinary measures to control the financial deficit within the stipulated timeframe. Enactment of /lManipur Public Servants Personal Liability Act 2006/1, under which, all public servants, including the political executive, are personally liable to make good the loss incurred by the State on account of their unauthorized omissions/commissions, further strengthened the need for CPIS.

The implementation of CPIS has provided many benefits, it has enabled every department to maintain a correct database of employee profiles vis-a.-vis sanctioned post in the State Data Centre. Every department is now able to update the database to the State Data Centre directly from their office, which in turn helps finance department to generate any kind of report without waiting for the reports from the department. This ultimately has helped the Treasury to control State's expenditure. Backward regions in the State now have all their officials in the place of posting.

Organisation

Directorate General of Systems & Data Management, Central Board of Excise and Customs

Initiative: Implementation of the Risk Management System (RMS)

WITH the economic growth of the country, trade has multiplied whereas infrastructure has not kept pace. In response to the changing trade and security landscape nationally and internationally, the Risk Management System (RMS) was introduced in December 2005. It brought in a great degree of consistency, transparency and efficiency, which helped building of confidence among traders and other stakeholders. The RMS has demonstrated the potential to bring about transformational change in the way imports are handled at India's ports. g

Indian pride held high across the globe

- **NTPC Vindhyachal** (2 x 500 MW) Stage-III has been conferred the **IPMA SILVER MEDAL** for Project Excellence by International Project Management Association, at the IPMA Congress, held in Rome, Italy, for implementation of project in record time and achieving excellent environmental, economic performance and giving outstanding support to the local community.
- Ranked **#1 Independent Power Producer in Asia** in the **THIRD ANNUAL PLATTS TOP 250 GLOBAL ENERGY COMPANY AWARDS** - 2008 for outstanding Global Financial and Industrial performance at the award ceremony in Singapore. The Corporation has been simultaneously ranked **# 15, overall in Asia amongst the energy companies.**
- **NTPC – CenPEEP (Centre for Power Efficiency & Environment Protection),** set up in collaboration with USDOE has been conferred Jury Award at **"INDIA POWER AWARDS 2008"** for its efforts in reducing GHG emissions by Council of Power Utilities.
- **GOLD TROPHY** in **SCOPE MERITORIOUS AWARDS - 2006-07** for **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & RESPONSIVENESS** in recognition of its commitment and commendable contribution in the area of CSR.
- Ranked **# 1 Best Workplace in India** among Large Organizations for the year 2008, by **Great Places to Work Institute's** India Chapter in collaboration with **The Economic Times**.
- **Leadership Award for CMD, NTPC** in the **4th Global Leadership Summit** by Amity University for Sectoral Excellence in Power Industry for his outstanding contribution to the growth of Indian business and bringing glory to the country through his pioneering leadership.

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A 15-POINT PROGRAMME FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT

What are the items of business the incoming government should take up asap?

by PRABHAT KUMAR

IN *Alice in Wonderland,* Alice asks the Cheshire cat, "Which path should I take from here?" and the cat replies, "That depends mainly on where you want to go."

The question is important in the national context today. A new government is going to be in office in less than two months. Whether it wishes to continue with the ongoing trend of governance or wants to break new ground will determine its agenda for the next five years.

The new government will obviously not be new in its configuration. The same players of the political game, whether of this party or that, will wield power at the Centre. I do not foresee a sea change in the dynamics of power that include unprincipled contracts between those who share power. I do not see any reduction in corruption, unfairness or injustice. I do not see the emergence of a revolutionary spirit in favour of the poor and deprived. In short, I have no hope for better governance than we have suffered during the last decade or more. The paradox is that when we urgently need a performing and effective government, we may not get one. An unstable ruling coalition is most likely.

Yet, were I to think of a progressive agenda for the new government, here is what comes to mind. The larger development and welfare canvas has been painted hundreds of times by thinkers, economists, social scientists and governance experts. We can always revisit what has been prescribed by eminent analysts and theorists. The devil, they say, lies in the details. The election manifestoes of the major political parties evidence their objective of wooing the electorate. Loyalty to the manifesto is not necessary. Broad guidelines do occupy a pivotal place in public policy formulation. But people cannot eat policies. The policies have to be translated into programmes and schemes, and further broken down into individual projects. The projects then become understandable to ordinary people like you and me.

Babu's kingdom: citizen's nightmare

Now, the key question is what happens to the projects with laudable objectives.

Recently, my friend TS Krishna Murthy spoke at the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) national conference. He said, "In my opinion, the time for talking about reforms is over. Whatever reforms have taken place have been only incremental and therefore have been tantalizingly and agonizingly slow in implementation and impact. Our mantra from now on should be 'No more incremental reform;

Recommended roadmap

Constitutional and legislative

1. Legislation for one-third representation of women in Parliament and state legislatures. The Bill has repeatedly lapsed due to lack of political consensus.

2. Right to Education legislation to be passed, notified and implemented. It has been delayed despite being in the Constitution for seven years.

3. The Lok Pal Bill has lapsed eight times since 1968. The ARC has recommended that the proposed ombudsman for political corruption be given Constitutional status and be called Rashtriya Lokayukta.

4. Labour law amendments to remove inspector raj are long awaited.

5. The Judges (Inquiry) Bill carries little credibility. It should be modified to make the judiciary transparent and accountable to the people.

6. The Representation of Peoples' Act should be amended to provide for 50 per cent + 1 principle and "none of the above" in the ballot list. Besides, candidates with chargesheets should be barred from contesting.

7. Early enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Bill and Confiscation of Properties relatable to Corrupt Practices Bill is desirable.

People-friendly action

8. Internal security should be the prime concern of the new government. Modernization of the police, strengthening the intelligence set-up, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism require immediate attention. Police recruitment on a large scale and modernization should be completed in a time-bound manner. Autonomous Federal Investigation Agency to be created.

SHARAD SAXENA

I do not see the emergence of a revolutionary spirit in favour of the poor and deprived. In short, I have no hope for better governance than we have suffered during the last decade

we need to transform totally' if we have to survive the global competition and meet the expectations of the people. The sooner we transform our practices, procedures and policies in all sectors of governance the better for the survival of our democracy or else we may have to face the people's wrath in the form of violent agitations or total revolution."

He further observed that our immediate focus ought to be in respect of civil service, police, judicial and electoral reforms.

Now, tell anybody even remotely interested in public governance and he will immediately agree. But tell the new masters in North and South Blocks; they will dismiss it by saying they have known this for decades, there is nothing new in it. So, they have to be told in the language they understand.

At a national conference on transparency and accountability as far back as April 2005, I had made the following suggestions:

- Rewrite all rules and regulations in every Central Ministry and every state government department within one year to simplify them and change their basis from suspicion to trust. Simultaneously, make the penalties for their violation very severe. For example, penalty for evasion of taxes should be mandatory imprisonment.
- Enact and notify Central Right To Information legislation without any further delay. Every state government should also do so in one year.
- The legislation relating to protection of whistleblowers should be immediately enacted. It should not be confined to protection of whistleblowers as has been recommended by the Law Commission, but should also provide rewards to them.
- The law regarding forfeiture of properties relatable to corrupt practices should also be put in the statute book without delay. The draft is available with the government.
- Every Ministry should complete the exercise of exiting from such functions which are not mandatorily required to be done by the government. For instance, there is no need for the government to issue driving licences if the penalty for traffic offences is sufficiently high.
- The use of computers in government offices should be a rule rather than exception. Manual processing of public services corrupts them.
- All Swiss bank accounts held by Indian nationals should be nationalized. This simple act would neutralize hundreds of thousands of crores of rupees, which could then be used to create economic and social infrastructure for the poor.
- Similarly, it would be prudent to consider the seemingly outlandish suggestion of demonetizing the currency and replacing it with a new currency to unearth the black money held by mafia, drug runners, corrupt businessmen and also corrupt officials and politicians.

I had added that these suggestions were fraught with the risk of opposition from the lawmakers themselves. In the four years since, only one of these suggestions has been implemented. I sometimes wonder how the RTI Act was passed by MPs!

Nobel laureate Paul A Samuelson was asked whether he did not get bored setting the same questions in the examinations year after year. He replied, "No, because in economics, we keep changing the answers every year."

Similarly, good governance is also a moving target.

I would prioritize 15 immediate tasks classified under three heads for the new government *(see box)*.

Bill Clinton memorably won his first election in 1992 with a single-sentence slogan: "It's the economy, stupid!" It behoves the new government to send out this same message to all Ministries, departments and state governments. g

9. The Bharat Nirman Plan comprising roads, telecommunications, water supply, housing, electricity and irrigation in rural areas should be vigorously pursued in a time-bound manner.

10. NREGS must be made more effective and transparent.

11. Watershed management should be taken up in mission mode. The new guidelines framed by the Planning Commission should be effectively followed.

12. Anti-graft and honesty should be introduced in the school curriculum. China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nigeria, Poland, Ukraine, Philippines, South Korea and Indonesia have introduced anti-corruption classes.

13. The government should take up R&D in solar and wind energy as a national mission.

Administrative steps

14. The recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission should be considered within a one-year time-frame.

15. The recommendations of the National Commission on enterprises in the unorganized sector should be acted upon immediately.

Jaya invokes vastu
delhi farmhouse haven

SASIKALA, the foster sister of AIADMK supremo and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, recently made a two-day trip to New Delhi and speculation is rife about its real purpose and intent.

Many people believe it was to raise resources in the wake of the elections as it is common knowledge in Chennai that the AIADMK is facing a severe funds crunch. However, when a businessman sent an aide with a handsome donation to be handed over to Jayalalithaa, she summarily sent the emissary back. The message was loud and clear: whoever wants to make a donation must appear in person and hand it over personally to Jayalalithaa.

What is known to have transpired during Sasikala's visit is that she visited Jayalalithaa's newly-built farmhouse in the Vasant Kunj area of South Delhi. She stayed at a five-star hotel and gave instructions to the Vedic pandits, engineers and interior designers about the finishing touches, colour schemes et al. It is all being done according to the precepts of vastu.

Apparently, Jayalalithaa wants to spend some time in the farmhouse after the heat and dust of the general election settles.

Rajnath's on a roll
stage set for victory

WHEN BJP president Rajnath Singh finally settled on a Lok Sabha constituency – Ghaziabad in western UP – he needed a man of political substance to make a dent in this prosperous belt. He found a socialist veteran, former MP and Jat leader, Satpal Malik, and started touring the region with him. In return, Malik was promised a party ticket from Meerut and asked to start nursing the constituency.

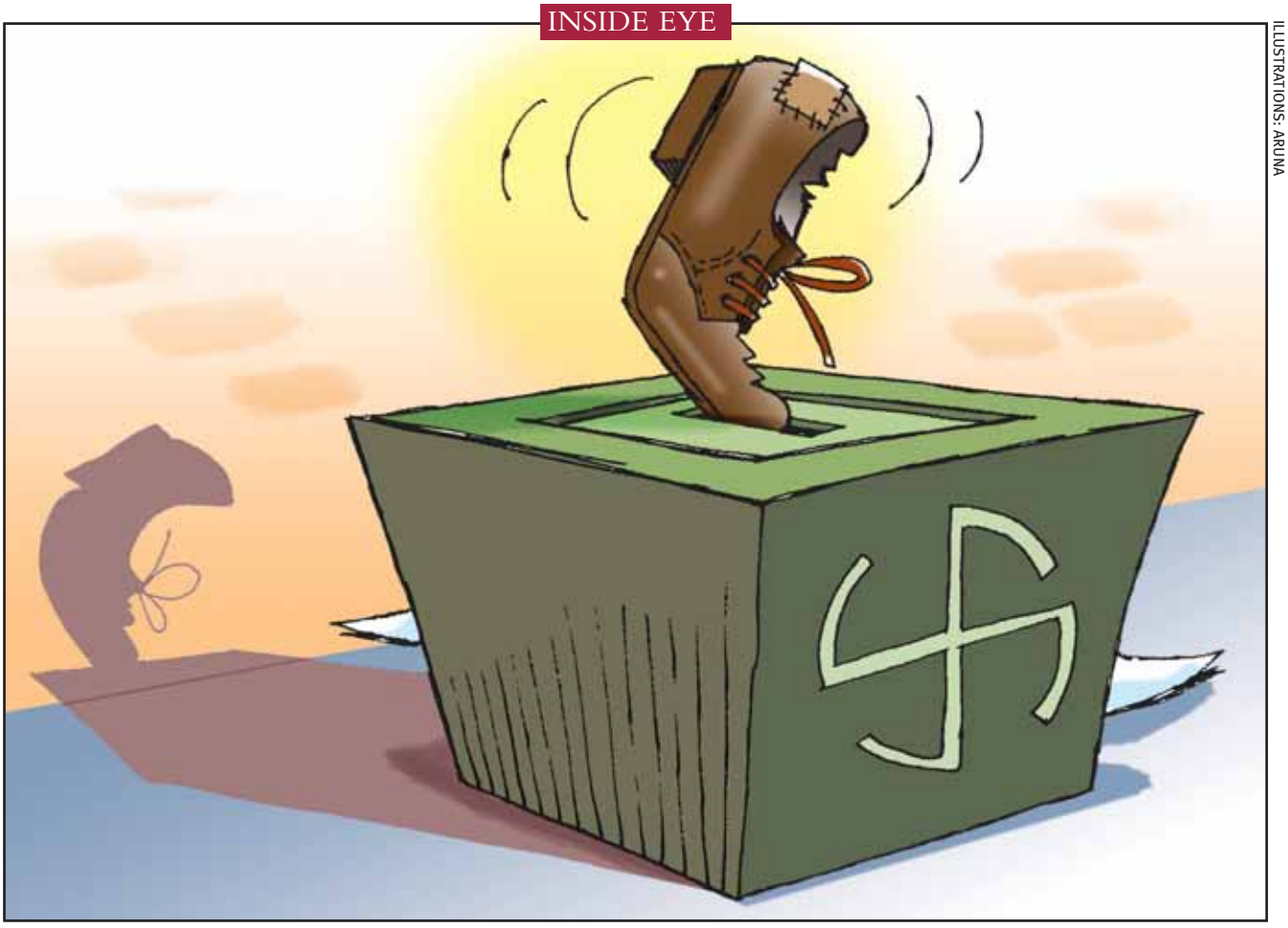
While touring with Malik, Rajnath figured out veteran politician Ajit Singh's strength vis-a-vis the numerically and otherwise powerful Jat voters of Ghaziabad, and won him over as, in the case of the latter too, the BJP is more politically suitable than the Congress. To woo Yadavs and other Backwards, Rajnath fielded lightweights against Mulayam Singh Yadav and Kalyan Singh in the Mainpuri and Etah Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively. Sources say he also ensured, through a controversial Thakur of the Samajwadi Party, that Mulayam did not field any candidate from Ghaziabad.

Assuming that Brahmins would be divided between the BJP and BSP, the only front left unmanaged was the Vaish community. To win them over, Rajnath's men, in an organized and methodical manner, advocated the right of a Vaish to contest from Meerut. RSS bigwigs at Nagpur were concerned that the defeat of the BJP president would send wrong signals nationwide and so a Vaish candidate was duly put up.

As for Malik, he became a casualty of the craft of constituency management.

Jaya versus Maya
why amma's pitching for pawar

SHARAD Pawar, the old warhorse who has had several homecomings in the Congress and is currently chieftain of the Nationalist Congress Party, apparently wants to make one last bid for the office of Prime Minister. He has built a rapport with all political parties and leaders, irrespective of ideology. Interestingly, AIADMK supremo J



ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

Jayalalithaa has taken up the cause of Pawar being the Prime Ministerial candidate of the fledgling Left-promoted Third Front. And, though Pawar has refrained from making public his longstanding ambition, friend Jayalalithaa has sounded the bugle.

Left leaders are watching keenly as they want to see the back of Manmohan Singh because of the Indo-US nuclear deal. But the lobbying for Pawar might cause fissures in the Third Front because of Mayawati's Prime Ministerial aspirations. The Left parties, especially big brother CPI(M), have been insisting they will decide on their Prime Ministerial candidate after the elections when the arithmetic becomes clear.

It is clear Jayalalithaa is working overtime to keep Mayawati at bay as the AIADMK leader has a reputation for being a better and more capable leader as far as governance is concerned.

Mohsina's karma
ambition proves undoing

WITH ND Tiwari and Arjun Singh – the two stalwarts of the erstwhile Tiwari Congress – having been cut to size in Congress politics, it's now reportedly the turn of the third one, Congress General Secretary Mohsina Kidwai. Her qualifications – relation to India's first Home Minister, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, and her association with the late Chandrajit Yadav since her formative years – have lost their appeal owing to some misinformation being circulated by her to keep party leaders and workers confused.

Sources say the gossip doing the rounds is that she once declined the offer of a Cabinet post made personally by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, that Rahul Gandhi wanted her to become Political Secretary to Sonia, and that she has been promised a berth in the next UPA government. Alarmed at her ambitions, party leaders have started digging out once again tales of her role as MP from Meerut when intermittent rioting over three months (May-July 1987) resulted in hundreds of deaths. She reportedly never ventured out to control the riots and provide relief to the victims. Party workers believe that the seeds of the Muslims bidding goodbye to the Congress were sown then and there, well before the Babri Masjid demolition.

The party high command has taken a serious view of all this and, once the Lok Sabha elections are out, the third wicket of the Tiwari Congress could well fall. g

Promising the

Parties vie to catch voters' fancy by making pledges they w

by VIJAY SANGHVI

POLITICAL parties face the need to win elections in order to get a mandate to be in the seat of power. For that they need popularity and hence they have to search for sources of popularity. War used to be one of the easy means of winning popularity. Now, wars beyond the borders have gone out of fashion because of their changed character and their prohibitive costs. A war within the borders by exploiting religious, communal and caste differences is equally unaffordable because the political legitimacy of such a regime or party is questionable in the international comity.

So, parties have found an easier source of popularity – the war of empty promises: of subsidized food, cheaper education, better health risk coverage, lower taxes and better pay scales for nominated employees who have to carry on administration and defend the nation. None shows any concern for the backbreaking burden of economic, social and cultural costs involved. The country would be economically insolvent if all their promises were to be implemented sincerely. They know these are empty promises that need not be kept. Even if they wanted to keep them, the delivery system would not let them.

For the first half of the last century, the test of political legitimacy was the capacity to protect the nation's borders. However, another test of equal importance has gradually replaced it. By the end of the century, it has come to be the only litmus test for most parties. That significant test is the capacity to deliver the goods. It is known as the anti-incumbency factor and has come to dominate electoral politics. Its significance increased with spread of education, expanded spectrum of media, availability of means of communication and internet connectivity that bring the entire world into even lower middle-class homes.

Remember, Indira Gandhi's promise of two meals a day for all as a right won her the massive mandate of March 1971. She trounced leaders who had sacrificed their youth to the freedom struggle and had maintained a patronage system as their foundation. But she could not deliver on her promises for various reasons, including her misreading of people and the need for the party to stand as an edifice in the political arena. In three years, she lost control over politics and even the nuclear explosion in May 1974 did not come to her rescue. Even after she converted her political crisis caused by the Allahabad High Court verdict into a Constitutional one by imposing the Emergency and abrogating political rights, she could not win back the masses and had to face electoral disaster.

The Janata Party that came to replace her regime had promised restoration of political legitimacy but it could not become a political alternative to the Congress as it got mired in the personal power ambitions of some leaders and disintegrated in less than 30 months.

Rajiv Gandhi came to power with an unprecedented majority. PV Narasimha Rao did not have a majority. Atal Behari Vajpayee had to ride on the back of an unstable coalition experiment. Each of these three governments completed a full term but none returned to power with a popular mandate in the last 25 years.

The main reason was that they could not meet the rising expectations of the masses for a better delivery system so that they could get what was their right without delay and without having to pay bribes. The delivery system got stuck in the yawning chasm caused by the checks and balances intended to provide corruption-free governance. Myopic politicians were led up the garden path by bureaucrats who convinced them that every evil – political, economic, social and cultural – can be cured only by legislation and the more prohibitive, the better.

The country would be economically insolvent if all their promises were to be implemented sincerely. They know these are empty promises

ILLUSTRATION: ARUNA

moon...

ill not, and cannot, ever keep

Even the right to education for children was sought to be implemented by prescribing punishment for parents who failed to send their children to schools and not by creating awareness about the benefits of education.

But such legislation created greater opportunities for corruption. The British Raj of a hundred years was replaced with a Licence Raj for the first 50 years of independence because of the economic development model adopted. The pursuit of self interest, as Adam Smith had perceived two-and-a-half centuries earlier, did not lead to improved economic conditions of all. It became an instrument in the hands of a few who could innovate methods to circumvent processes and prohibitions on economic activities in the private sector. It also resulted in keeping the growth rate at close to 3 per cent per annum for 50 years and came to be known as the Hindu Growth Rate – a pejorative term to describe India's march towards economic independence.

In the economic reform era, even after 15 years, the per capita purchasing power of nearly three-fourths of the population remained stuck at Rs 20 a day. However, the rich managed to increase theirs five-fold. Every party that came to power or had a share in it, declared full adherence to the economic reform programme. LK Advani, now PM-in-waiting, toured the country to tell people how India was shining in the six years of the NDA regime that followed the same programme that Narasimha Rao had earlier adopted. The masses refused to believe him, as their mandate in May 2004 explicitly showed.

Today, both the main parties are in a mad race to shower empty promises of cheap and subsidized life for those below the poverty line and relief from the debt burden for farmers. Has either party considered the psychological impact of this on the man who honestly paid his debt? Or the financial burden it would entail on the national economy? Will any farmer repay his debts in future or wait for another waiver from the government in power before the next election? And what will be the consequence in the rural banking sector?

And who is going to implement the promises made by them in their manifestoes which do not reveal their thoughts on the need to improve the delivery system to keep these promises? Their cadres were not present at National Rural Employment Scheme worksites to ensure that workers got their legitimate dues. A visit as a common man by any politician to any office of the treasury, civic bodies, income tax, sales tax, VAT and service tax officers or any government office dealing with the public would serve as a shock for him. When six million tonnes of food grains stored in unhygienic conditions in Food Corporation of India godowns rotted in six years (1972-77) and was reduced to D category that was not edible even for cattle, no one was held responsible.

Throwing crumbs of subsidized food at the poor is hardly a solution because it makes them dependent on state charity and does not empower them or equip them with purchasing power that brings dignity to their life. Schemes for the welfare of the poor during the last 25 years did not achieve this. They merely kept the poor at the mercy of the administration.

Offering scholarships or financial assistance to poor students was also no solution without efforts to improve the quality of education in government schools. Only then would larger numbers need such assistance. Health risk insurance was yet another bogey because governments have not undertaken expansion of hospitals, facilities for outdoor patients and indoor bed facilities. No new larger government hospital has come up in Delhi in the last 30 years. A few have come up in the private sector where a patient has to dole out Rs 20,000 a day for a room and pay extra for visits by different medicos and consultants. Existing government hospitals cannot cope with the heavy rush of poor patients as they are under pressure to attend to patients recommended by politicians. Expansion of health care facilities is also a part of the delivery system.

Yet, political parties show complete ignorance of the failure of the state delivery system and also of the need for delivery. Nor are the poor taken in by these empty promises. Even they know it is not possible for politicians to keep their promises. They have enough experience of how parties have failed to implement their promises in the states.

Politicians' major failure is their ignorance of how the poor live. No party has promised them cheaper salt. In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi had showed to the world through his Dandi March the importance of salt. Today, the poor are compelled to purchase their salt at Rs 14 a kg in the name of iodised salt because manufacturers convinced the rulers of its essentiality for mental growth. The fact is that iodised salt becomes common salt within hours if not stored sealed. The poor have no means of storing it sealed. So they consume common salt but pay seven times more for it. They are being fed on empty promises. g

Yet, political parties show complete ignorance of the failure of the state delivery system and also of the need for delivery. Nor are the poor taken in easily

NOTE POWER, VOTE POWER

What is taking place in the electoral arena is commerce rather than the democratic exercise of the right to vote

by MG Devasahayam

SIX decades ago, "we the people" gave ourselves adult suffrage based on a democratic system of governance through a Constitution built on four solid pillars – justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. We are now in the midst of the general election to constitute the 15th Lok Sabha, the supreme elected institution of India's democracy. This is the time for us to introspect as to where we are and where our democracy is. With the Economist Intelligence Unit recently ranking India among the world's "flawed democracies", this becomes all the more significant.

Even a cursory assessment of the state of the nation today would reveal that all the four pillars of India's Constitution stand severely corroded. This is largely because Parliamentarians – representing "we the people" – have by and large failed to stand by, protect and defend these pillars of democracy. Because, for them, such matters were mundane and the last priority.

The Constitution of India draws much from that of the US. Decades ago, while hailing the American Constitution as a document "reared for immortality", Joseph Story warns: "It may nevertheless perish in an hour by the folly, or corruption, or negligence of its only keepers, THE PEOPLE. Republics are created – these are the words, which I commend to you for your consideration – by the virtue, public spirit and intelligence of the citizens. They fall when the wise are banished from the public councils because they dare to be honest, and the profligate are rewarded because they flatter the people in order to betray them."

These premonitions seem to be coming true in the Indian context. Our Republic is wavering because the honest, sincere and genuine among her sons and daughters are being increasingly banished from the public councils and do not find place in the hallowed portals of Parliament or state legislatures. In the event, India's fabric of democracy is getting rent and is being replaced by a system of top-down kleptocracy marked by sycophancy, arrogance, criminalized corruption and vulgar wealth.

Our chaotic political system and the resultant convulsions in the electoral arena are the root causes of this malady. Though India's Constitution is very comprehensive, it has totally left out politicians and political parties from its purview and has not prescribed any standards or norms for them. As a result, parties are mutating and multiplying like frogs and are being run as autocratic fiefdoms with assured dynastic succession. This is what *India Today* wrote in 2004: "They all sound like Louis XV of France: *Après moi, le deluge* – 'After me, the deluge'! Indian politics is fast evolving into a singular story, biologically at least, in which the paranoid helmsman/helmswoman has become the least democratic entity in one of the world's most volatile democracies. He/She is the party. He/She is the policy. He/She is the ideology. Across the political spectrum the heir is no longer apparent, unless a genetic extension of the paramount leader...."

It is the age of the chosen/appointed leader, not the elected one. Fear of the unknown and the survival instinct ensure that the chosen one chooses the family – or divides and rules. Ideology is dead. And ideas are far from any leader's mind. The alternative to the leader is the leader himself. The next leader in any of the political parties will not be chosen by inner-party democracy, but by ancestry or desperation.

What is taking place in the electoral arena is commerce rather than the democratic exercise of the right to vote. The ongoing election is likely to witness "note power", almost totally eclipsing "vote power". To ensure this, a cash flow-based

The popularity of this model in the ongoing election is evident from the fact that in the 124 constituencies where the first phase of the election took place, there were 222 candidates with criminal records and 193 declared *crorepathis*. Most of them belonged to national parties

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Mukhtar Ansari: dons in the fray

business model has been perfected and put into practice! Under this model, cash flow (ensured to party leaders by candidates seeking a nomination, to cadres and competitors during campaigning, to voters before voting) is refined and restructured. Party tickets are purchased with huge amounts of cash or *benami* property. And votes are booked in advance through cash payments and tokens for gifts and gadgets along with lavish biryani feasts.

The Centre for Media Studies has been researching the impact of this cash-for-votes practice among the low-income electorate over the last couple of years. Its finding is that a high percentage of voters are being paid cash. Coming specifically to states, its report says: "A much higher percentage of voters in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh acknowledged receiving cash as an inducement than in Bihar or Uttar Pradesh. The amount involved in these northern States was much less than in the southern States. The 2009 Assembly-cum-Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh could well be the most 'expensive' ever: nearly half the voters, it is expected, will be given Rs 500 or more per vote."

No wonder, a former president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee says, "If you don't have a minimum of Rs 2 crore cash in hand, there is no use contesting an Assembly election."

The apportionment of cash-for-vote is 70 per cent for bribe/liquor and 10 per cent each for vehicles, publicity and miscellaneous expenses. Typically, there are around 2 lakh voters in an Assembly constituency and a substantial number need to be purchased to ensure victory. This time, one vote is likely to cost Rs 1,000 in most constituencies. Inclusive of expenditure on liquor, this accounts for 65-70 per cent of the total budget of Rs 2-4 crore. Using the same ratio, for a Lok Sabha constituency the cash flow may range from Rs 10-15 crore.

CRIME is the "value-added" component of this business and we now have a well developed "cash & crime business model". The popularity of this model in the ongoing election is evident from the fact that in the 124 constituencies where the first phase of the election took place, there were 222 candidates with criminal records and 193 declared crorepathis. Most of them belonged to national parties. In eastern Maharashtra's 13 poorest constituencies – known for farmer suicides – there were 29 *crorepathi*s in the fray.

In the 15th Lok Sabha, democracy will be "enriched" by the people's representatives getting in through this business model. This state of affairs is due to the "folly, corruption and negligence of its only keepers, THE PEOPLE". In the event, the Election Commission's exhortation – "We, the People, through the exercise of our right to vote have the ultimate power to shape the destiny of our democracy by electing our representatives" – sounds utterly hollow.

An amended Nani Palkhivala version would be more appropriate: "We, the People, who gave unto themselves a Democracy but not the passion to keep it, who suffer and endure in silence after trading their votes for cash and crumbs." g

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Stabbed in the back

No matter what happens, this Karnataka politician, and once-humble farmer

by TR Ramachandran

IN 1996, the self-proclaimed humble farmer from Hardanahalli village in Karnataka stunned himself, the political firmament and the nation at large by being catapulted to the office of Prime Minister. In 2009, Hardanahalli Doddegowda Deve Gowda, now 76, was fired up again – due to astrologers' prophesies that he would make his way up to Raisina Hill once again. So Deve Gowda took the initiative to launch the Third Front from his home state. So what if some leaders like the BSP's Mayawati were conspicuously absent? More important was his gung-ho equation with the Left leaders. After all, it was the late Harkishen Singh Surjeet of the CPI(M) who rolled the dice in favour of Deve Gowda as the compromise candidate for PM of the United Front, a motley coalition of 13 parties which lasted about 11 months from June 1996.

In several ways, Deve Gowda's elevation as India's eleventh Prime Minister marked a transition from the domination of upper-caste, university-educated Brahmins. His rise reflected the changing power matrix from one dominated by politicians in the North with bases in the Hindi heartland.

Prime Ministership was something Deve Gowda had not aspired to even in his wildest dreams. He had once remarked, "I am a rude politician with not too many niceties. I know my limitations and will not cross the borders of Karnataka." As Prime Minister, he faced considerable criticism. His government was lampooned for being the least experienced the country had seen over five decades. He was criticized for having only a handful of ministerial colleagues who had wielded power at the national level. It seemed that for him the job was no different from the only other one he had known till then, as Minister for Irrigation and Public Works in Karnataka.

Remembered in his village as a poor boy who herded sheep after school, Deve Gowda studied by candlelight while in primary school. The son of a lower caste farmer who worked three acres of land, he learnt farming and civil engineering and worked briefly as a small-time contractor.

He joined the Congress and remained in it till 1962, when he won the Assembly poll from Holenarasipur as an Independent. In 1975 he was jailed for 18 months for opposing the imposition of Emergency. In Karnataka's seventh and eighth Assembly, he served as Minister for Irrigation and Public Works. He resigned from the Cabinet in 1987 in protest against insufficient allocation of funds for irrigation. Thereafter, he became president of the state Janata Party twice and then president of the Karnataka Janata Dal in 1994. On being elected leader of the JD legislature party on December 11, 1994, he became the 14th Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Barely 11 months later, on May 30, 1996, he was sworn in as Prime Minister. It was his leadership of the National Front, a group of regional parties which was a non-Congress, non-BJP combine, that led to his installation as PM. He had played an important role in reuniting the Janata Dal after the original outfit splintered in 1980. In 1996, when no party achieved a clear mandate in Parliament, he had led the Janata Dal to a resounding victory in the Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka.

His rise was not only steady but eventful. Regarded as a relatively unsophisticated man unable to speak the national language, he proved a canny political pragmatist. The son of a Kuruba mother and a Vokkaliga father, he attracted divergent castes and religious groups. He became a protege of former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, who wanted him to oversee his political affairs in Karnataka – clearly trusting him more than the high-flying Ramakrishna Hegde. Chandra Shekhar also took Deve Gowda under his tutelage when he came to Parliament for the first time as MP from Hasan. He was always a backbencher in the Lok Sabha, keenly observing and imbibing.

He has been backstabbed by any number of people and proved adroit at returning the favour. As a natural corollary, he has inducted family members like sons Revanna and Kumaraswamy, and daughter-in-law Anita Kumaraswamy in politics.

There were allegations of nepotism against his sons. Revanna had served as a Minister in the Deve Gowda-promoted coalition government with the Congress headed by Dharam Singh of the Congress. In 2006, his other son, Kumaraswamy,

Predilection for prediction

Years ago, a Delhi University Sanskrit lecturer by the name of Devendra Mishra, who was also a well known astrologer, told Deve Gowda that he would become Prime Minister. The humble farmer laughed and told Mishra he could charge any fee he liked, but that he should not lie to him.

When he did become PM, Deve Gowda went to thank Mishra and asked what he could do for him. Mishra's wish was modest: promotion to professorship and a house on the DU campus. But Deve Gowda said he would make him Vice-Chancellor. Mishra explained that he was not VC material and would be content being a professor.

Earlier, when Mishra had met Deve Gowda after he became Chief Minister of Karnataka, he had said he would continue in that office for 10 years. But Deve Gowda's Chief Ministership lasted 10 months. So did his Prime Ministership! The preponderance of the figure reaffirmed Deve Gowda's faith in Mishra.

Deve Gowda is a frequent visitor to the head of the Kodi Mutt in Arsikere of Hasan district. The seer, who has told Deve Gowda that he has a chance of becoming PM again, apparently told Indira Gandhi to contest from Chickmagalur. The rest is history. Will his words be equally prophetic for Deve Gowda?

and stabbing back

will never stop believing that fate will always fawn on him

SHARAD SAXENA

Deve Gowda: barefoot but well-heeled

engineered a split in the JD(S) when he took 40 MLAs and joined hands with the BJP. The coalition government fell and Deve Gowda resigned as JD(S) president, owning moral responsibility for failing to save the Dharam Singh government. However, in February 2006 he withdrew his resignation and suspended the 40 JD(S) MLAs, including Kumaraswamy, then Chief Minister, from primary membership of the party. It was believed that the entire farce was orchestrated by Deve Gowda as he supported Kumaraswamy in aligning with the BJP provided the latter agreed to a common development agenda.

Today, Deve Gowda is banking on his immediate family rather than undependable loyalists to keep the flag flying

He also agreed to coordinate the BJP-led alliance at the national level. This was at variance with his earlier stand that he would not have any truck with the BJP and led to a fight in the JD(S).

Today, Deve Gowda is banking on his immediate family rather than undependable loyalists to keep the flag flying in politics. His second daughter-in-law, Bhawani Revanna, is poised to enter politics. Deve Gowa is waiting for an opportune moment for her debut and is believed to be looking for a safe Assembly seat for her.

Spartan in his ways, Deve Gowda's staple diet of millet balls became known to the nation during his days as PM. He gave up non-vegetarian food long ago. Meticulous by nature, he would stay up late at night preparing notes for debates in the Lok Sabha. His penchant for falling sleep at public meetings and even during interviews is well known but is forgiven due to his amiability. g

Between the dragon and the deep blue sea

Our foreign policymakers must react with pragmatism to Chinese clout with the US and our neighbours, besides other realities

by Col R Hariharan

THE global economic downslide triggered by the US fiscal crisis has introduced a new paradigm in the international power equation. The West appears to be looking at China, sitting on nearly $2 trillion of Forex reserve, to stabilize their sagging economies. Even in the current economic downturn, despite 25 million job losses due to fall in exports, China has clocked 6.1 per cent growth in the first quarter year on year. This year it is targeting 8 per cent annual growth. In contrast, the US figures are skewed with an annual deficit of $1.7 trillion, unfunded debt of $11.1 trillion, and unfunded liabilities of at least $43 trillion. So it was not surprising that Chinese President Hu Jintao's suggestion that possibly IMF special drawing rights should replace the dollar as the main reserve currency dominated the thought process of the latest G20 summit, even before it began. And it seems the Chinese money power is here to stay for some time as the American woes have just begun.

The American dispensation under President Barack Obama is clearly downplaying human rights abuses in China, the perennial hobbyhorse of its China policy, much to the horror of human rights conscience keepers. This was dramatically illustrated in February this year, during Hilary Clinton's visit to Beijing – her first port of call after assuming office as the US Secretary of State.

Her main concern on this trip was not China's human rights abuses on which she spoke so critically during her September 1995 visit as the spouse of President Bill Clinton. It was more down to earth: reassuring Beijing about the safety of its large investments in US government securities and keeping the Chinese trade surplus capital flowing to the US.

The signs are clear: the US and China are entering into a marriage of necessity. The Chinese depend upon US consumers for a quick recovery of their export-oriented manufacturing sector while the US depends upon China to continue its purchase of US Treasury Bonds to finance President Obama's stimulus plan. This symbiotic relationship in the making can influence the US stand on many contentious issues that had confronted its relations with China. And many other Western powers queuing up for Chinese largesse are going to be no different.

Historically, China considered itself the Middle Kingdom – the centre of the world. And it is well on the way to turning this into a modern-day reality. Even before the global economic downturn, China was going about it systematically in three areas – international assertion of power, modernization of the armed forces, and emergence as the number one economic superpower. Now it is leveraging the global economic crisis to enable the process.

China is already a dominant military power in Asia. The Pentagon annual report on Chinese Military Power released on March 25 considers the growth of China's Navy a source of concern. According to the report, China has the "most active land-based ballistic and cruise missile program in the world". At the strategic level, this includes the long-range ICBM with a range of almost 7,000 miles – good enough to target any location in the US, let alone Asia. China is also building more Type-094 ballistic missile submarines. It is poised to make a major breakthrough in submarine technology. The development of Hainan naval base has caused both Japan and India concern. With increasing Chinese political and economic forays in India's neighbourhood, China will increasingly occupy a large horizon in India's security spectrum.

As the US economic recovery may well last the whole duration of President Obama's presidency, we can expect some changes in the US policy prescriptions to cater to Chinese sensitivities to affect South Asia.

How should India respond to this new US-China equation? The new government taking over the reins of power in New Delhi in May may be saddled with this uncomfortable question.

During 2008, Chinese strategic analysts have even hinted at the possibility of a limited war with India over the border question! China had been sending mixed signals on its relationship with India. A few illustrations will suffice.

When President Pratibha Patil visited the Buddhist pilgrim town of Tawang in early April, the Chinese Foreign Ministry was not happy about it and conveyed its objections

The American dispensation under President Obama is clearly downplaying human rights abuses in China, the perennial hobbyhorse of its China policy, much to the horror of human rights conscience keepers

SHARAD SAXENA

Singh and Hu: can't ignore each other

to New Delhi. This is not the first time Beijing has done so. In February, Beijing objected to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's scheduled visit to Arunachal Pradesh ("Southern Tibet", in Chinese parlance), in particular Tawang. Though the Prime Minister visited Arunachal Pradesh, he avoided going to Tawang! The Chinese reasoning was simple: Tawang is within the territory claimed by China although it had been under Indian rule ever since India became independent.

The Chinese objection came only a month after the two countries had signed "The Shared Vision for 21st Century", a document jointly affirming far-reaching cooperation between the two countries, during Manmohan Singh's visit to Beijing. Both nations also signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in 10 different fields ranging from armed forces to railways, healthcare and rural development.

On October 29 last year, British foreign secretary David Miliband announced that the previous British actions, including the Simla Accord (1913) and thus the McMahon Line, had been an anachronism and a colonial legacy. He apologized to China for not having renounced those actions earlier. The British "apology" knocks down the very basis of India's stand on the Sino-Indian border dispute.

It is unclear what India's reaction to all this, including Miliband's statement, was because India never unambiguously expresses its sensitivities on specific issues to the concerned countries. This is so even in the case of Sri Lanka. It is time we started stating our views clearly, if not loudly, when the issues affect us.

Indian policymakers – not merely MEA bureaucrats, but political leaders as well – have to take a hard look at how we handle foreign policy. As R Swaminathan, former Special Secretary, suggests, we should evolve a national foreign policy just as we have a national security policy. The two policies should dovetail each other to reinforce national strategic goals. We should learn to evolve a national political consensus on major foreign policy issues so that other countries we deal with know they are dealing with the nation and "not merely with a transient government". As a nation, we cannot afford to dither any longer.

There are three fundamental issues relating to China that confront us – the border dispute, increasing Chinese influence in our neighbourhood, and the presence of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees in our midst. Each one of them merits a detailed analysis. But the first two issues are more easily tractable than the Tibetan issue.

As far as the border dispute is concerned, both nations can go on "talking" forever, given the Asian penchant to defer rather than resolve uncomfortable issues. It would probably be prudent now to accept the present Line of Actual Control on our border with Tibet and turn it into a "Line of Administrative Control", as suggested by Swaminathan. The discussions on the border dispute can go on without military confrontation now and then.

India-China trade has grown from $18 million in 1991 to $38.2 billion in 2007. It is set to grow to $60 billion in 2010

South Asia, with a growing economy of over 1.5 billion people, is an enormous market for Chinese goods. China is trying to increase its influence in this region through political, military and economic means. It has made significant progress in trade in this region. It has built strong bonds with Pakistan and Bangladesh, which harbour sanctuaries of terrorist organizations operating against India. It has built a symbiotic relationship with Myanmar's ruling junta. In Nepal, the Maoist regime is more favourably disposed towards China than India. China's footprint is increasing in Sri Lanka. These are realities.

However, India has its own strategic and economic advantages in dealing with China as well as its neighbours. India is too big an economic entity for China to ignore. India-China trade has grown from $18 million in 1991 to $38.2 billion in 2007. It is set to grow to $60 billion in 2010. So India needs to take multi-faceted initiatives to leverage its advantages and make it difficult for China to make further inroads in this region.

China will continue to flex its military muscle on our borders and extend its presence further in the Indian Ocean. We need to build our military clout to discourage China. Unfortunately, thanks to bureaucratic red tape, our military modernization is limping. The battle worthiness of the armed forces will be seriously suspect if we do not resolve this perennial problem.

In a nutshell, pragmatism rather than politicking need to govern our security and foreign policies. We should clean up our act internally so that we can be powerful externally. There is no other choice. g

(Col R Hariharan, a retired MI officer, is associated with the Chennai Centre for China Studies)

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'For 13 years, we ourselves from

SINCE inception in 1995, under the I&B Ministry, Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd (BECIL) has been a profit-making undertaking that has paid regular dividends to the state exchequer. The Mini Ratna company has played a pivotal role in the growth of radio and television broadcasting through terrestrial, cable and satellite transmission in India and abroad. BECIL is a consultancy agency, system integrator and turnkey solution provider in all spheres of broadcast engineering including operation and maintenance of various types of broadcast systems. Its client list includes government, semi-government and private organizations within the country and abroad. To private sector clients it provides the security of being a government enterprise as well as efficiency of the highest order. CMD Harkesh Gupta talks about his organization's contribution to this hi-tech sector on the eve of launch of the FM-II revolution in the country. **Interviewed by Gopal Misra**

'Our performance and time-bound delivery system despite many odds and violence in the host country impressed the Afghan government'

Q: *Can you throw some light on the need for incorporation of BECIL by the government?*

A: Seeing the present significant role of the private sector in broadcasting, it is interesting to note that radio broadcasting was started in India by a private company, viz. Indian Broadcasting Company Ltd, in 1927. The company went into liquidation within three years and was taken over by the government on an experimental basis for two years. The government then took it over in May 1932 and named the service Indian State Broadcasting Service, later renamed All India Radio. From this humble beginning, Indian broadcasting has witnessed a revolution with the coming up of satellite channels and opening of the broadcasting sector to private participation. The expertise in the field had mostly remained in government hands with the exception of allotment of time slot on AIR's FM transmitters. With the opening of the broadcasting sector after the Gulf War in 1989, more and more satellite channels started beaming programmes to India. By 1991-92 the scene reached such a stage that Indian companies also felt the need to broadcast via satellite. They needed an expert agency to advise them. Such expertise was then available only with AIR and Doordarshan. The Government of India decided to incorporate an agency for this purpose.

Q: *How has the formation of BECIL helped the country?*

A: An expert agency became available to private broadcasters. An expert agency was thus already available when broadcasting was opened to private broadcasters through the scheme of private FM Broadcasting Phase-I launched in 1999, offering 108 FM channels to private operators in 40 cities. Private operators did not have to run to foreign countries for expertise. The same benefit also accrued in the setting up of TV earth stations wherein the first two private broadcasters' satellite uplink stations in the country were set up by BECIL.

Q: *What are the main areas of BECIL activities?*

A: BECIL provides consultancy service including turnkey jobs in terrestrial radio and television broadcasting, satellite uplink and downlink systems including DTH, TV automation system, community radio, acoustics, audio-video systems (sound reinforcement systems/conferencing/recording/production and post-production systems), MMDS, CATV Network, besides broadcast operations and event-based satellite services.

Its services range from system design, planning and specifications to site-selection, installation and commissioning to project running, costing, staffing and in-service operations regardless of location.

BECIL also places, on suitable terms, technicians, engineers and experts in various organizations for operation and maintenance of broadcasting systems. It also supplies broadcasting equipment, especially to government departments.

In addition to its commercial activities, BECIL provides technical inputs to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting for formulation of various policies related to broadcasting.

Q: *Which countries does BECIL operate in?*

A: Mauritius, Bhutan, Kuwait, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Singapore and Qatar. Notable is the execution of various projects in Afghanistan entrusted by the Ministry of External Affairs under its India Aid Programme.

Q: *What has been BECIL's role in Afghanistan?*

A: The situation in strife- torn Afghanistan is well known to us. India and Afghanistan have a long history of friendship and cooperation. In the hour of their crisis, the Government of India prepared a package of assistance and offered it. It includ-

have sustained our own profits'

'BECIL's share of turnover from private operators is about 58.7 per cent. Even in the case of government work, it has to compete in the real market'

ed refurbishing of media facilities, including radio and TV stations. The Ministry of External Affairs entrusted the work to BECIL. Our performance and time-bound delivery system despite many odds and violence in the host country impressed the Afghan government. In addition to revamping the radio and TV setup, their government was keen to revive its defunct national daily, *Kabul Times*. The terrorists had already destroyed the equipment and office of the daily. It was a Herculean task, because Kabul lacked human resources to run the daily.

Q: *In the era of convergence, what other work has BECIL done in connection with media?*

A: BECIL played a key role in setting up the Media Centre at the recently held Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune. It was done in active collaboration with the Press Trust of India (PTI) to cater to the needs of audio, video and print media. The Pune event received wide national and international coverage and BECIL's efforts have been appreciated. It is hoped that we will be able to repeat our efforts on a much larger scale for the Commonwealth Games in 2010.

Q: *What has been BECIL's role in setting up systems connected with EDUSAT?*

A: IGNOU, University of Goa, Abdul Nazir Sahib Institute of

Gupta (left) with Minister Anand Sharma: paying dividends

Rural Development, Mysore, and SATCOM, Jaipur are examples where BECIL has played a key role in setting up of earth stations as well as studio classrooms. It has enabled quality teachers and academicians to reach students of remote areas even in their homes. It has enabled students to access the best teachers through EDUSAT.

Q: *The government now seems keen to monitor radio and TV channels. Has BECIL any role in it?*

A: BECIL has already set up an Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) for TV channels. It is operational and will be expanded to monitor more channels. The government has entrusted BECIL with setting up a monitoring system for private FM radio stations. We have already undertaken the work at all the private FM stations across the country. We plan to have a centralized system for FM monitoring also.

Q: *Do you visualize any role for BECIL in helping security agencies to fight terrorism?*

A: BECIL has undertaken a step towards supply of communication and security equipment to security agencies. The company is planning to expand its activities in this direction.

Q: *Does BECIL's success revolve around government-sponsored assignments?*

A: No. As I have mentioned earlier, our clients include government, semi-government autonomous and private organizations. BECIL has a strong market presence in broadcasting. This year, its share of turnover from private operators is about 58.7 per cent of its total turnover. Even in the case of government work, including those of Prasar Bharati, BECIL has to compete in the real market.

Q: *What are your expansion plans?*

A: New developments are taking place in the broadcasting sector due to convergence of broadcasting, telecom and IT which offer fresh opportunities and challenges. The company plans to expand its activities to be able to cater to the growing market demand in upcoming areas like High Definition Television, Digital Terrestrial Transmission, Mobile TV, IPTV, EDUSAT programmes, Commonwealth Games coverage, besides gearing up for the enormous amount of work for FM Phase-III which is expected to cover a large number of cities.

Q: *How much do these efforts reflect on your balance sheets?*

A: For 13 years, we have sustained ourselves from our own profits. We have booked returns in our balance sheets almost twice the investments made in the company. This year, we have paid a dividend of Rs 28.065 million to the state exchequer. g

birthdays

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TRACKING

For a complete list of appointments & retirements, see www.indianbuzz.com

ARVIND JHADAV
The 1978-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has been appointed Chairman cum Managing Director of Air India.

M NIZMUDDIN
The 1993-batch IES officer has taken over as Additional Development Commissioner in the Government of India.

EK BHARATBHUSHAN
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre has become Chairman and Managing Director of Air-India.

NAINI JAYASEELAN
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Union Territory has joined the Planning Commission as Adviser.

JOE SEBASTIAN
The 1990-batch IRS officer is now ED in the Sports Authority of India.

RAKESH CHOPRA
The 1971-batch IRSE officer is now Member (Engineering), Railway Board and ex-officio Secretary to the Government of India.

MUKUL JOSHI
The 1975-batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre has been appointed Secretary, Inter-State Council Secretariat.

NEELAM KAPOOR
The 1982-batch IIS officer has taken over as Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau.

FRANK NORONHA
The 1982-batch IIS officer is now Director General, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity.

RAJESH VERMA
The 1987-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre has become Chief Vigilance Officer, Rural Electrification Corporation.

BIMAL JULKA
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been appointed Resident Commissioner of Madhya Pradesh in Delhi.

AK SINGH
The 1972-batch retired IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre is now Member, Public Enterprise Selection Board.

SANJAY KUMAR
The 1992-batch IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre has joined the Government of India as Director, Economic Affairs.

BK GUPTA
The 1973-batch IRS officer has been appointed Chief Commissioner of Income Tax I, Kolkata.

ARTI SAWHNEY
The 1973-batch IRS officer has been appointed Chief Commissioner of Income Tax I, Delhi.

NIRUPAM SEN
The 1969-batch retired IFS officer is now Special Senior Adviser to the president of the 192-member General Assembly on the world financial and economic crisis.

PIYUSH GOEL
The 1994-batch IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre is now in Washington as India's main external Intelligence officer.

BK BAWA
The 1991-batch IPS officer of the Punjab cadre has been appointed DIG, Patiala.

BALBIR TEGTA
The 1996-batch IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre has been appointed Director, Census Operation, in the state.

JAYATI CHANDRA
The 1975-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been appointed Secretary,Youth Affairs in the Government of India.

SINDHUSHREE KHULLAR
The 1975-batch IAS officer of the Union Territory cadre is now Secretary, Department of Sports.

DINESH KUMAR JAIN
The 1975-batch IFS officer, who is Ambassador to Mexico, has been concurrently accredited as the next High Commissioner of India to Belize with residence in Mexico City.

RAJAT BHARGAVA
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has taken over as Resident Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh in Delhi.

ARTI AHUJA
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre has become Secretary, Handlooms & Textiles of the state.

HARDEEP SINGH PURI
The 1974-batch officer has been appointed the next Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations.

VED PRAKASH
The 1986-batch ITS officer has joined the Ministry of Heavy Industries as Director.

INDU LIBERHAN
The 1972-batch IDAS officer has taken over as Secretary, Defence Finance.

PRANAY VERMA
The 1994-batch IFS officer has joined as Director in the Foreign Secretary's office.

VINAY SHUKLA
The 1974-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been posted as Member of the Madhya Pradesh Board of Revenue at Gwalior.

Moving On: ias and ips officers retiring in May 2009

ASSAM-MEGHALAYA
SF Khongwir (1995)

ANDHRA PRADESH
Jainder Singh (1972)
P Bhanu Murthy (1996)

BIHAR
S Vijayaraghavan (1973)

CHHATTISGARH
BK Sundar Ray (1972)

HIMACHAL PRADESH
Rashima Gupta (1984)
Jyoti Ram Gazta (1989)

JHARKHAND
Sushma Singh (1972)

JAMMU & KASHMIR
PS Baetab (1993)

KARNATAKA
SM Acharya (1974)

KERALA
KJ Mathew (1975)

MAHARASHTRA
Johny Joseph (1972)

TAMIL NADU
Rajaram Sriram (1972)
A Elangovan (1982)

UNION TERRITORY
Suyash Prakash (1993)

WEST BENGAL
Mihir Kiran (1993)

ips

GUJARAT
RP Priyadarshee (1980)

KARNATAKA
Subash Bharani (1975)
T Jayaprakash (1986)
MK Nagaraja (1990)

HARYANA
MS Ahlawat (1991)

JAMMU & KASHMIR
Rajinder Tikoo (1970)

MADHYA PRADESH
DR Kori (1996)

UTTAR PRADESH
Yashpal Singh (1972)

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The Country Trusts SAIL Steel

SAIL steel being used in the modernisation of Mumbai Airport's domestic terminal

Since its inception SAIL has contributed in a major way in the development of all major infrastructure in the country. At present SAIL steel is being used in several projects of national importance in the country. A few are listed below:

Power Projects - SAIL is supplying various steel products, for major thermal and hydro power projects such as Barh, Chandrapur, Mejia, Dadri, Simhadri, Lower Subansiri etc. It is primarily supplying plates, SAIL TMT bars and structurals among other products.

Worli-Bandra Sea Link - Promoted by Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, this link will connect the island city of Mumbai with its western suburbs. More than half of the total steel being used for the project is from SAIL.

J&K Railway Line - This 340-km-long railway line will join the Kashmir valley with the Indian Railways network. The project area falls in seismic zone-V. SAIL steel is being used because of its reliability and durability.

Tsunami Rehabilitation Social Infrastructure Project - SAIL supplied light structurals, SAIL JYOTI GP/GC sheets, SAIL TMT, PM Plates and HSM Plates for this rehabilitation project undertaken at Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Windmills - Suzlon, a renowned name in windmills, is using SAIL steel for setting up wind-mills in Maharashtra and other regions in India. Plate mill plates in sizes varying from 10 to 40 mm are being used for the wind-mills.

Irrigation Development - SAIL has provided various sizes and grades of steel for several irrigation projects across the country such as Tapi, Indirasagar, Rajivsagar, among others.

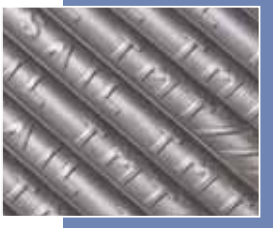
Mumbai Airport - MIs GMR has entrusted the job of modernisation of Mumbai Airport to Pratibha Pipes & Structurals Pvt. Ltd. who have completed a major portion of the job using Plates and SAIL TMT.

Delhi Metro - Delhi Metro has become the pride of nation's capital within a very short time. SAIL is proud to be a contributor in making of this metro-marvel.

Steel Plants - Most upcoming green-field and brown-field steel plants are depending on SAIL steel for their construction.

Defence - SAIL is meeting the high quality steel requirements of the Indian defence including that for Aircraft carriers, submarines, etc.

SAIL JYOTI GC Sheets



SAIL TMT

SAIL JYOTI GP Sheets

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Markets spring a surprise!

A 40 per cent rise in the Sensex from the lows of early March has taken investors by surprise. Even market experts are baffled and are trying to find explanations for such a sharp rise. This is the kind of rebound I have always been talking about when I say that investors should not try to time the markets, looking for the bottom. The first stage of rebound usually occurs this way and most of the small investors do not even believe that the next bull run may have begun since all bull runs are born in scepticism.

The pessimists do not expect a V-shaped recovery to happen soon.... Leading indicators such as bank credit and non-oil imports leave hardly anything to cheer about

Whereas a large number of investors may believe it to be yet another relief rally of the bear markets, the fact remains that many of them feel they have missed the bus yet again. A staggered investment approach would have given a return of at least 25 per cent on the average price paid for the stocks you have always fancied. The fact of the matter is that many of the stocks have notched up gains of as high as 100 per cent or more from the lows they recently made.

The big question that everyone seems to be pondering is, "Is the worst over for the markets?" There are two ways of looking at the picture. Those who are optimists and believe that the markets have bottomed out say that all bad news has already been discounted by the markets and it is just the reporting of these news that is taking place now – be it the dip in exports, IIP or the quarterly corporate results. They think that reporting of such news will actually prompt the RBI to go in for further rate cuts sooner rather than later and may in fact give a further boost to the markets. Mind it, the market discounts the future well in advance to indicate what lies in store for the economy at large and corporate sector in particular.

Moreover, there has been a continuous flow of good news from abroad and within the country. The only factor feared now is a fractured mandate from the ongoing electoral battle. Even this is not considered a factor serious enough to influence the markets since the latter have of late started to keep themselves fairly insulated from politics. Also, the much touted decoupling theory for Indian markets will indeed come into play now and is likely to witness a much sharper rise compared to leading markets abroad. The Indian markets will be amongst the most attractive investment destinations for foreign capital due to the second highest growth rate it is likely to achieve for the year 2009-10.

Interestingly, most investors were expecting the markets to bottom out post-elections when they were all planning to buy. This may not happen, though I do not entirely deny the possibility of a correction happening post-elections, that too if the mandate is too confusing to have essential implications on reforms and the ability of the new government to fight the ongoing slowdown in the economy with full vigour. However, with 40 per cent gains already made, investors should wait for a breather since the next correction may be their last chance to enter the markets at attractive valuations.

The pessimists do not expect a V-shaped recovery to happen soon. Though the demand for some consumer goods have started looking up with the sales of commercial vehicles and cement despatches creating room for some optimism, leading indicators such as bank credit and non-oil imports leave hardly anything to cheer about. The government has already spent its entire fiscal fire power. It remains to be seen as to what the next government will do. It is widely believed that whichever coalition comes to power, public spending and subsidies will rise at the cost of fiscal slippage.

Kalindee Rail Nirman (Engineers) Ltd

CMP: Rs 109

KALINDEE Rail Nirman is engaged in installation, commissioning of signalling and telecommunication projects, and execution of gauge conversion projects for the railways. It is the only company, except IRCON, doing a total turnkey job for Indian Railways. The company's future is governed mainly by the growth of Indian Railways and the Metro Rail Transport system. The Government of India has planned to spend a massive amount on construction and infrastructure-related projects to be spent within the Eleventh Five Year Plan. This is likely to further swell the already solid order book position of the company, which is going to be one of the biggest beneficiaries from the dedicated freight corridor proposed by Indian Railways connecting Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Mumbai with New Delhi, Ludhiana and Kolkata, a distance of 2,763 km, at an estimated cost of Rs 51,000 crore. The low promoter stake and L&T already acquiring slightly less than 15 per cent stake makes the company a potential takeover target. An investment with a 2-3 years' time horizon can give decent returns. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.

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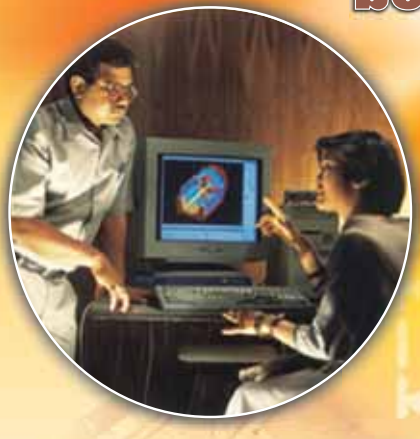

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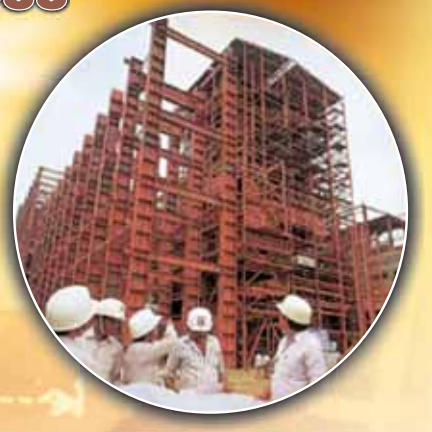

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Arms against a uniform!

NOTWITHSTANDING a discernible disquiet, moves are afoot to create a new post of coordinator in the Union Home Ministry. It is envisaged that a serving brigadier will shoulder this assignment to coordinate the activities of the security forces

in tackling the increasing menace of Naxalism which has spread to no fewer than 17 states.

North Block mandarins are wary of the prospect of a uniformed person being foisted on them. So it appears the proposal of a brigadier working in the Home Ministry might have to await the advent of the new government at the Centre.

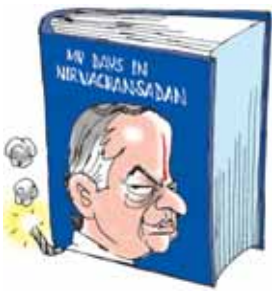
No one is willing to stick their neck out in disclosing whose brainchild this is. It could well be Union Home Minister P Chidambaram's. But all the civil servants are on guard and it is evident that till the general election gets over no effort will be spared in ensuring the proposal comes to nought.

Gopu tells all about EC days

FORMER Chief Election Commissioner Needamangalam Gopalaswami has penned a book titled *My Days in Nirvachan Sadan*. The first two chapters are said to be explosive, more so than even the letter he wrote to President Pratibha Patil seeking dismissal of current CEC Navin Chawla because of his partisanship towards the Congress.

Though the Election Commission is an autonomous body created by the Constitution, the CEC is only empowered to make recommendations and it is for the government to accept or reject them. In this case, the Congress-led UPA government predictably rejected Gopalaswami's suggestion. Many civil servants feel he should have resigned then.

Gopalaswami's lone regret when he bid adieu to Nirvachan Sadan was said to be his inability to contain moneypower in elections. He



was also reportedly pained at the leaking to political parties of crucial decisions taken by the three EC members among themselves. This enabled political bigwigs to intervene even before the formal release of the order by the EC.

"Gopu" or "Gapal", as he is known in the Civil Service, where he served as a 1966-batch Gujarat-cadre IAS officer, has now returned to home base in Chennai.

PC versus Narayanan

THERE seems no love lost between ambitious Home Minister P Chidambaram and National Security Adviser MK Narayanan. Despite enjoying a free hand in matters relating to his Ministry, Chidambaram is leaving no stone unturned to manage Narayanan's exit from his present post and veritable

exile as Governor of a state.

Little does the Minister realize that Narayanan, a retired IPS officer of the 1965 batch and former Director of the Intelligence Bureau, is more experienced than him in security matters and also enjoys the trust of 10, Janpath. This was apparent at the Civil Services Awards function on April 21. Those present included Cabinet Secretary KM Chandrasekhar, Principal Secretary in the Prime Minister's Secretariat TKA Nair, Vice-President Hamid Ansari, a former IFS officer, and Narayanan himself. The applause for Narayanan's address must surely have dampened Chidambaram's spirit.

Cul de sac for Neera Yadav

THE controversial former Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Neera Yadav joining the BJP on the assurance of a Lok Sabha ticket by party president Rajnath Singh took party stalwarts like Murli Manohar Joshi and LK Advani quite by surprise. They immediately set about opposing the decision.

Neera is reportedly close to Mulayam Singh Yadav and has the dubious honour of having been voted one of UP's most corrupt officials by the state IAS association. The man who spearheaded the move, Vijay Shankar Pandey, also faced charges of corruption during his stint as Managing Director, UP Spinning Mills. He is now the new Brahmin face of Mayawati's government, reportedly enjoying unlimited power in the Chief Minister's Secretariat as the Additional Cabinet Secretary.

Neera belongs to western UP and wields considerable influence among the masses because she has extended help to many people throughout her career. Rajnath, who is contesting the Parliamentary election from western UP, felt he would benefit from her entry into the party. When he did not budge under pressure from Joshi and Advani,

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

Pandey made a clever move.

He told his supporters in the state IAS association as well as Rajnath that, if Neera was given a ticket for the Lok Sabha polls, the association would make public all the files relating to corruption during her career. A former yesman of Joshi during the NDA regime, Pandey thus endeared himself to Mayawati, Joshi and Advani, and pre-empted any likely threat to his career in the event of Neera becoming an MP. g

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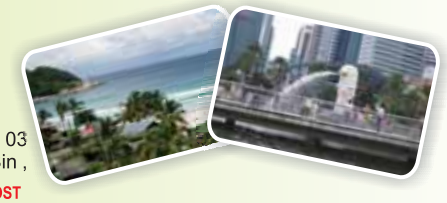

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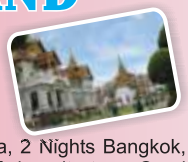

Incl.: *Airfare with all taxes*, 2 Nights Pattaya, 2 Nights Bangkok, Stay, Breakfast, Return airport transfers, Half day city tour, Coral Island tour with lunch.

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5 Days JET AIRWAYS

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4 Days AIR INDIA

Rs. 40,999/-* Per Person

Incl.: *Airfare with all taxes,* Stay, Breakfast, half day city tour of Hongkong & Macau, Ferry tickets, ferry transfers, Disneyland pass.

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8 Days CATHAY PACIFIC

Rs. 33,000/-* Per Person

Incl.: *Airfare with all taxes*, B/f, transfers, city tour of Bangkok & Singapore, coral island tour with lunch in pattaya, *Singapore Visa.*

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LOW AIR PACKAGES

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* All Meals & Casino Coupon

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Ramada	Rs. 15,555/-	Victor Exotica	Rs. 13,333/-
		Goa Beach House	Rs. 12,888/-

Incl.: Per Person, Airfare, All meals, Transfers, Sightseeing.

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Heavenly Kashmir	4 Night /5 Days	Rs. 15,222/-
(Breakfast & Dinner, Day Trip to Gulmarg)		
Enchanting Kerala	4 Night /5 Days	Rs. 14,222/-
Munnar- 2 nights, Thekkedy-1 night, Alleppey-1 night.		

Incl.: Airfare, Per person, Accommodation, Breakfast, Transfers, Sightseeing.

LTC 80 GOA SPECIAL

Rs. 15,999/- *Per Person* *Club Mahindra* 5*

Rs. 14,999/- *Per Person* *Goa Beach House* 3*

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